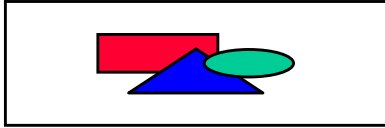# UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

National Strike Force

Liaison Officer Manual

Commanding Officer
National Strike Force
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NATIONAL STRIKE FORCE INSTRUCTION M1640

Subj: INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM LIAISON OFFICER MANUAL

1. PURPOSE. This manual was developed to provide detailed guidance to persons assigned to fill the Liaison officer command staff position within an Incident Command System (ICS) organization. It is equally applicable to planned events and contingency responses. The Liaison Officer's functions, as described in this manual, are based on information drawn from various sources, including the Coast Guard ICS Oil Spill Field Operations Guide, ICS training courses sponsored by national Wildlife Coordinating Group member agencies, and experience at actual incidents.

2. ACTION. All personnel assigned to fill the Liaison Officer command staff position within an ICS organization should become familiar and comply with the provisions set forth in this instruction.

3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. None

4. DISCUSSION.   Experience has shown that the Liaison Officer has a significant impact on the efficiency of resource use during response operations and on stakeholder perceptions regarding the success or appropriateness of the response. Both of these factors are critical to the successful accomplishment of ICS stakeholder service and support objectives. This manual is a compilation of best practices intended to assist a Liaison Officer in the performance of his/her duties. No material contained herein is intended to conflict with Coast Guard regulations or other directives from higher authority or to supersede or replace any order or directive issued by higher authority. Any apparent conflicts shall immediately be brought to the attention of the Chief, Operations Division, National Strike Force Coordination Center.

5. CHANGES. Serially-numbered changes and additions to this manual shall be issued when necessary.

G. A. WILTSHIRE

Preface:

The job of liaison during an emergency response is a critical one. It can have a large impact on the efficiency of resource use during the response operations, and on the perception of stakeholders regarding the success or appropriateness of the response activities. Both of these factors are critical to overall response success. This manual is a compilation of best practices intended to assist current and future Liaison Officers in the performance of their duties.

NOTICE

If time is critical, refer to the ICS Liaison Officer Job Aid located in Appendix B-1. Then review the manual as time permits.

Liaison Officer Manual

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Chapter

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Introduction:

This Liaison Officer manual has been designed to be useful for all incidents, for all agencies, and for all hazardous responses.

This description of the Liaison Officer's role in the manual is compatible with the National Interagency Incident Management System's (NIIMS) Incident Command System (ICS) adopted by the Coast Guard and the National Response Team (NRT) for use in coordinating a response to an incident.

However, whereas the NIIMS model focuses the liaison effort strictly toward assisting/cooperating agencies, this model has expanded the position responsibilities to include liaison with stakeholder groups. This role has been identified as a critical piece in the successful prosecution of a response wherein one or more public factions may view response activities as controversial.

Definitions

Agency Representative – individual assigned to an incident from an assisting or cooperating agency. This person is appointed by their agency.

Assisting Agency – an agency that directly contributes resources to operations.

Cooperating Agency – an agency that provides assistance, outside of the actual response operations, in direct support of incident objectives.

FOG – U.S. Coast Guard Oil Spill Field Operations Guide (ICS-OS-420-1)

ICS – Incident Command System: a management system that provides a common structure and language for use in a crisis.

IC – Incident Commander: the individual responsible for the management of all incident operations (the IC is in charge when a unified command is not applicable).

ICP – Incident Command Post: that location at which the primary command functions are executed and usually collocated with incident base.

IAP – Incident Action Plan: contains objectives reflecting the overall incident strategy and specific tactical actions and supporting information for the next operational period.

IO – Information Officer: the member of the Command Staff responsible for communicating with the public. There is only one Information Officer per incident.

JIC - Joint Information Center: a collocated group of representatives from involved agencies and organizations designated to handle public information needs. The JIC is part of the Command Staff and is led by the Information Officer.

LO – Liaison Officer: The member of the Command Staff responsible for communicating with assisting and cooperating agencies and stakeholder groups. There is only one Liaison Officer per incident. For the purposes of this manual, the term LO shall be interpreted to include assistant LOs.

NIIMS – National Interagency Incident Management System: a National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) developed program consisting of five major subsystems which collectively provide a total systems approach to all-risk incident management. The subsystems are: the Incident Command System, Training, Qualifications and Certification, Support Technologies, and Publications Management.

Public – those in need of information. The public can be the media, a community or groups within a community, government entities, or any other identifiable group.

Public Information – knowledge of an event needed by the various stakeholders. Stakeholders may have ties that are economic, political, environmental, or general.

Stakeholders – any person, group, or organization who is affected by and has a vested interest in the incident and/or the response operation.

UC – Unified Command: a unified team effort which allows all agencies with jurisdictional responsibility for the incident, either geographical or functional, to manage an incident by establishing a common set of incident objectives and strategies. This is accomplished without losing or abdicating authority, responsibility, or accountability.

The Liaison Officer

Introduction

This chapter covers the Liaison Officer (LO) description, qualifications and general responsibilities. The criteria in this chapter reflect information found in the Command Section (ICS-220) of the NIIMS ICS Position Manual, and the FOG ICS-OS-420-1, as well as some supplemental material.

Job Description

The LO:

❑ Is a member of the command staff.

❑ Is designated by the IC/UC.

❑ May be a federal, state, local, or responsible party individual.

❑ Reports to the IC/UC.

❑ Is responsible for the information flow between the response organization and other agencies/stakeholder groups.

Primary Objectives

The LO's primary objectives are:

❑ Contribute to the efficiency of the response by ensuring the best use of available assisting agency resources and cooperating agency support, and

❑ Contribute to the positive public perception of the response and the attainment of stakeholder objectives by effectively handling stakeholders and their concerns.

These objectives are met by providing an information link between (1) the incident command organization and assisting and cooperating agencies; and (2) the incident command organization and stakeholder groups.

Qualifications

When considering persons to act as the Liaison Officer for an incident or event, the individual must:

❑ Have superlative interpersonal skills.

❑ Have previous crisis response experience.

❑ Be familiar with ICS.

❑ Be trained in risk communication, consensus building, and public relations.

❑ Be able to function calmly in a high-stress environment.

❑ Be able to delegate authority in order to meet liaison objectives.

❑ If available, hold a LO qualification in accordance with the NIIMS Liaison Officer position task book.

Responsibilities

The LO's primary responsibilities are to:

❑ Identify and link up with agency representatives from assisting and cooperating agencies.

❑ Ensure that the needs of assisting and cooperating agencies are met.

❑ Provide assisting and cooperating agency representatives with information/updates on incident status and response operations.

❑ Provide information to the IC/UC regarding assisting agency resources and cooperating agency support activities.

❑ Work closely with the Information Officer to ensure a clear delineation of responsibility for stakeholders interaction.

- Determine and provide information to the IC/UC on stakeholder groups and their interest in the response.

- Provide a forum for stakeholder groups to provide input into the response process.

- Provide incident personnel with information regarding inter-organizational contacts.

- Monitor incident operations to identify current or potential inter-organizational problems.

- Establish a "liaison office" staffed by assistant LOs and other persons appropriate for the complexity of the incident and liaison needs.

- Attend all meetings and briefings as identified in the FOG and as requested by the IC/UC.

- Meet all common responsibilities as stated in FOG.

When to use a Liaison Officer/Liaison staff

Establish a Liaison Officer/Liaison staff whenever:

1. The response entails participation by assisting and/or cooperating agencies.

2. Response activities elicit stakeholder group interest and/or concern.

Who Makes a Good Liaison Officer/Assistant/Staff?

In a Unified Command atmosphere, the Liaison Officer should be a member of the lead agency/entity, or the agency with primary jurisdiction. Assistants should be drawn as necessary from the same or other partnering agencies/entities.

Since liaison involves dealing with entities with jurisdiction or interest within a particular locality, knowledge of the local area and previously established relationships/familiarity with these entities can greatly simplify or ease the job of liaison. For this reason, personnel who normally work in the local area of the response are good choices for Liaison Officer/assistants/staff. For example, in the case of an oil spill, an individual active in the local Area Committee or an individual who attends Regional Response Team meetings would be a better choice than assigning the job to an out-of-towner called into the response.

Staff Size

Depending on the complexity of the incident, the need for a Liaison Officer may not exist. In this case, the IC/UC or the staff can handle all inquiries and suggestions from interested parties. However, when a significant incident arises and the need for a Liaison Officer is imminent, the position can quickly become overwhelming for one person.

Responders have historically underestimated the staffing required for effective performance of the liaison function/responsibilities. The Liaison Officer and the IC/UC should cooperatively determine appropriate staffing according to the impact of the incident. The number of assisting and cooperating agencies and the number and disposition of stakeholder groups will determine staffing needs as well as the size of the Liaison office.

Structure

Flexible Functional Approach

The structure outlined below is based on ICS span of control principles and should be customized to reflect the liaison needs of the incident. In the following examples, the boxes represent positions, and the lists are functions associated with those positions. Full-page versions of the examples are located in Appendix A.

<u>Small Liaison Office</u>

(3 to 4 people) | Liaison Officer |

| Internal Staff | | Stakeholder/Agency Staff |

Internal Staff:
Data Gathering
Dissemination
Info Boards
Fact Sheets
Supply

Stakeholder/Agency Staff:
Inquiries
Analysis
Scheduler
Briefings
Field Escorts

Medium Liaison Office

(5 to 11 people)

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                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │  Liaison Officer │
                        └──────────────────┘
                                 │
                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │   LO Assistant   │
                        └──────────────────┘
                                 │
        ┌────────────────────────┼────────────────────────┐
┌──────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────┐
│  Internal Staff  │    │   Agency Staff   │    │ Stakeholder Staff│
└──────────────────┘    └──────────────────┘    └──────────────────┘
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Internal Staff	Agency Staff	Stakeholder Staff
Data Gathering	Inquiries	Inquiries
Dissemination	Briefings	Meetings
Info Boards	Field escorts	Analysis
Fact sheets s	Scheduler	Briefings
Supply	Analysis	Field escort
Case Book		
Documentation		

Large Liaison Office

(12 to 14 people)

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                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │  Liaison Officer │
                        └──────────────────┘
                                 │
                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │   LO Assistant   │
                        └──────────────────┘
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   ┌──────────────┬──────────────┼──────────────┬──────────────┐
┌────────────┐ ┌────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌────────────┐
│Internal    │ │Agency Staff│ │ Stakeholder Staff│ │Protocol    │
│Staff       │ │            │ │                  │ │Staff       │
└────────────┘ └────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └────────────┘
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Internal Staff	Agency Staff	Stakeholder Staff	Protocol Staff
Data Gathering	Inquiries	Inquiries	Inquiries
Dissemination	Field escorts	Field escorts	Field escorts
Info Boards	Scheduler	Analysis	VIP support
Fact Sheets	Analysis	Briefings	Escorts
Supply	Support		
Case Book			
Photo/Video			

24-Hour Schedule

Depending on the length of the operational period prescribed by the IC/UC, a 24-hour operating schedule for liaison activities may need to be established. This is determined by the LO and the IC/UC. In the event that a 24-hour schedule is established, a relief LO and staff will need to be assigned. The responsibilities and functions are similar to those of the first shift. The LO on the second shift is in every way the LO for the response. This process provides a relief for the LO, while ensuring there is only one LO at any given time in the response.

Relief LO

The description, responsibilities, and qualifications for the relief LO are exactly the same as the LO.

Major Tasks

The Liaison Officer should be prepared to undertake several major tasks when responding to a major incident. These tasks include, but are not limited to:

- ❑ Establishing and managing a Liaison Office and staff.

- ❑ Representing and advising the IC/UC.

- ❑ Establishing the delineating of responsibility with the Information Officer.

- ❑ Maintaining awareness of incident expansion potential.

- ❑ Attending Command Staff/Planning meetings.

- ❑ Maintaining unit logs.

- ❑ Maintaining liaison with agency representatives.

Establishing the Liaison Office

The below listed steps should be closely adhered to upon establishing a Liaison Office:

1. Obtain an incident briefing from the IC/UC and review the Incident Action Plan.

2. Ascertain incident status, current or potential involvement of other agencies, and current or potential interest of stakeholders.

3. Determine the number of staff necessary to carry out the liaison function.

4. Select a location and coordinate with the logistics section for additional personnel, space, equipment, and supplies.

5. Develop an organization for the Liaison Office as staff arrive.

6. Develop/implement strategies and tactics for carrying out liaison responsibilities.

Managing the Liaison Office

To oversee the operation and management of the Liaison Office, the LO needs to:

❑ Ensure that the most qualified people fill the key positions in the Liaison Office.

❑ Ensure that all members assigned to the Liaison Office are fulfilling their responsibilities.

❑ Set the goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics for dealing with assisting /cooperating agencies and stakeholders.

❑ Turn in Liaison staff daily work hours to Finance Section

Locating the Liaison Office

The Liaison Office should be:

❑ Visible and accessible,

❑ Adequate to hold the entire liaison staff and agency representatives,

❑ In close proximity to the Joint Information Center, and

❑ Equipped with adequate communications capability.

Represent and Advise the IC/UC

The LO should represent and/or advise the IC/UC on all liaison matters associated with the response. In order to perform this task, the LO needs to:

❑ Meet with the IC/UC at least daily.

❑ Attend all command staff meetings and all other meetings where decisions are made that could impact assisting or cooperating agencies or stakeholders.

❑ Keep the IC/UC informed of liaison activities, particularly those involving stakeholders and forums to gain stakeholder input.

❑ Keep the IC/UC informed of stakeholder perception regarding the response activities.

❑ Provide the IC/UC the opportunity to attend all stakeholder meetings and provide IC/UC with all materials distributed to the stakeholders.

❑ Represent the IC/UC (when appropriate) when meeting with stakeholders.

Establish Delineation of Responsibility with Information Officer

The responsibilities of the LO and the IO often become intertwined because each position deals with entities outside of the response organization. In order to eliminate confusion and overlap, the LO and IO should discuss and decide on the delineation of certain responsibilities. An example of such delineation would be the following:

❑ LO is responsible for interaction with the assisting and cooperating agencies, and any public entity, namely stakeholder groups, which have a vested interest and will be expected to provide input into the response process.

❑ IO is responsible for interaction with the general public or community where the objective is mainly to provide information to them.

❑ During smaller incidents, the IO is solely responsible for not only the general public and community, but also stakeholder groups.

❑ IO is responsible for protocol functions (i.e. the logistics of honors, etc.) for visiting dignitaries. The LO may be called upon to escort visiting dignitaries while representing the IC/UC.

Maintain Awareness of Incident Expansion/ Contraction Potential

The response operation may expand due to an increase in magnitude of the problem or an unexpected turn of events. The response operation may be downgraded, as well, as incident objectives are met. By maintaining an awareness of the incident potential, the LO can inform Agency Representatives so that they can plan for either increased support or demobilization.

Attend Command Staff Meetings

The command staff meeting provides the opportunity for the Liaison Officer to:

❑ Obtain current incident objectives and a general plan for future operations, which can then be relayed to agency representatives for their planning purposes.

❑ Discuss the role of the Liaison Officer to ensure Command Staff understanding.

❑ Update the Command Staff on assisting and cooperating agency participation and any inter-organizational issues.

Attend Planning Meetings

The Liaison Officer will attend all planning meetings. As an active participant, the LO will:

❑ Update the Command and General Staff on assisting and cooperating agency participation and any inter-organizational issues.

❑ Provide input regarding assisting and cooperating agency considerations in support of the next operational period objectives, strategies, and tactics.

After the meetings, the LO will brief the agency representatives to ensure that the assisting agency resources are available to participate as planned in the next operational period. Additionally, the LO will ensure that the cooperating agency activities are aligned with the objectives and strategies for the next operational period.

Attend Operations Briefings

At the Operations Section briefings, the Liaison Officer will present assisting and cooperating agency reports of concern.

Maintain Unit Log (ICS 214)

A unit log (Appendix F) will help you remember events as they occurred if it becomes necessary to recount activities after the response is long completed

The LO will maintain a detailed log of significant items to include:

❑ Key decisions,

❑ Major meetings,

❑ Controversial issues and resolutions, and

❑ Actions taken and information passed.

Assisting & Cooperating Agencies

Introduction

This chapter covers the procedures and tasks to be followed when associating with assisting and cooperating agencies. An assisting agency differs from a cooperating agency in that an assisting agency directly contributes resources to operations, i.e. a local fire department. A cooperating agency provides assistance, outside of the actual response operations, in direct support of response operations, i.e. a sheriff. The requirements for either type of agency are very similar, therefore, they are discussed together. Where procedures differ between assisting and cooperating agencies, the difference is noted.

Major Tasks

A condensed "Task" checklist can be found in the ICS Liaison Officer Job Aid located in Appendix B

The following is a list of tasks that the Liaison Officer should be prepared to perform when dealing with assisting and cooperating agencies:

❑ Identifying assisting and cooperating agencies.

❑ Gathering information on assisting and cooperating agencies.

❑ Establishing meeting schedules with agency representatives.

❑ Determining appropriate agency representatives attendees for Planning meetings.

❑ Providing agency representatives with space and equipment in the Liaison Office.

❑ Requesting and distributing copies of the IAP to agency representatives.

❑ Ensuring that agencies receive acknowledgement and credit.

Identifying Assisting and Cooperating Agencies

When initially identifying the assisting and cooperating agencies, the LO should:

❑ Ascertain what agencies are already at the incident through discussions with the IC/UC and other incident personnel and review of the incident brief or IAP.

❑ Determine what other agencies might be available to provide resources, i.e. a state prison for beach crews or the local police for beach security.

❑ Use knowledge of local personnel and/or the local Area Contingency Plan to assist in the identification of appropriate agencies.

Gathering Information on Assisting and Cooperating Agencies

The LO should make initial contact and develop a roster of assisting & cooperating agency information. The roster should include:

❑ Name of agency and agency representative,

❑ Location of agency representative,

❑ Communication link, and

❑ Agency home unit and phone number.

Additional helpful information might include:

❑ Agency capabilities or expertise for incident support, and

❑ Name of alternate agency representative and contact number.

Establishing Meeting Schedules with Agency Representatives

The LO should meet with agency representatives as needed throughout the planning cycle to exchange information. The various meetings may include:

❑ An initial brief with agency representatives.

- ❑ A "prior-to-planning-meeting" meeting with agency representatives.

- ❑ A post-planning meeting for the distribution of the IAP and brief to agency representatives.

- ❑ A brief to agency representatives on demobilization procedures.

Determining Appropriate Agency Representatives for Planning Meeting

All agency representatives do not need to attend the planning meetings. The LO can authorize "key" agency representatives to attend, thereby maintaining manageability and adherence to the agenda and strict timeframe. In determining "key" agencies, the LO should include:

- ❑ Assisting agencies that are contributing a significant number of resources toward tactical objectives.

- ❑ Cooperating agencies whose actions are critical to response objectives and tactics being planned.

Providing Agency Representatives with Space and Equipment

Normally, agency representatives from assisting agencies will work out of the ICP. This is desirable so that the LO has immediate access to them at all times. Cooperating agency representatives may or may not remain at the ICP.

The LO ensures agency representatives have adequate space and equipment to work. This includes desks/tables, telephones, fax machines, radios, and administrative supplies.

Requesting and Distributing Copies of the IAP to Agency Representatives

The LO ensures that all agency representatives receive a copy of the IAP.

Ensure Agencies Receive Acknowledgment and Credit

The LO should ensure that all assisting and cooperating agencies receive credit for their participation in the response. Informally, this might be specifically naming the agencies and their contributions during a meeting, or possibly naming the agencies in a press release and/or press brief. Formally, recognition can be made in the form of letters of appreciation or awards after completion of the response.

MEETINGS WITH AGENCIES

Initial Brief with Agency Representatives

Upon the initial meeting with agency representatives, the LO should be prepared to supply them with information pertinent to the incident. This would include:

- ❑ Incident status,

- ❑ IC/UC direction, and

- ❑ Logistical support.

Once the information is passed, the LO should gather information regarding:

- ❑ Specific resources available from assisting agencies.

- ❑ Special agency needs, requirements, and constraints.

- ❑ The timeframe in which resources are to be available.

- ❑ Logistical support requirements for assisting resources.

- ❑ Any limitations or restrictions on use of assisting agency resources.

- ❑ Support activities being conducted or available from cooperating agencies and any limitations.

- ❑ Significant problems or issue areas.

"Prior-to-Planning Meeting" Meeting with Agency Representatives

A meeting may be held prior to the planning meeting in order for the LO to gather pertinent facts and information. Among this information, the LO should gather updates on the following topics:

- ❑ Assisting agency resource availability and condition,

- ❑ Cooperating agency activities, and

- ❑ Issues and/or problems that the agencies may be experiencing.

Post Planning Meeting with Agency Representatives

During this meeting, the LO passes the following information:

- ❑ Logistical information (food, medical, shelter) for agency resources,

- ❑ Support services available for agency equipment,

- ❑ General indication of agency resource assignments for the next operational period, and

- ❑ Incident status update, if applicable.

IAP Distribution Brief to Agency Representatives

This meeting is not always necessary, but may be used to:

- ❑ Review details of the plan for areas particularly important to agencies.

- ❑ Review agency resource tactical assignments and how agency reps can contact agency resources if necessary.

Demobilization Brief

The LO should be involved in demobilization planning, representing the agencies with respect to their needs and desires for removal of agency resources from the incident. Once demobilization procedures and priorities have been established, the LO informs agencies on the demobilization plan.

Additional Meetings/Briefs

The LO should be prepared to hold spontaneous meetings and/or briefs as changes in the incident occur. This will allow the agency representatives to plan accordingly.

The diagram below outlines the meeting sequence in a normal planning cycle. The meetings listed in bold print are those conducted by the LO.

Meeting Sequence in Planning Cycle

Incident Brief

Command Staff Meeting

Initial brief/"Prior-to-Planning Meeting" Meeting with Agency Representatives

Tactics Meeting

Planning Meeting

Post-Planning Meeting with Agency Representatives

IAP Approval

IAP Distribution/Brief to Agency Representatives

Operations Brief/shift change

Anywhere in cycle: **Demobilization Brief**

Brief After Change in Incident

Stakeholders

Introduction

This chapter covers the procedures and tasks associated with the stakeholder. A stakeholder is any person, group, or organization who is affected by and has a vested interest in the incident and/or response operation, i.e. marina owners, landowners, investigators, environmental trustees, etc.

Unlike the IO who broadcasts information out to the community, the LO meets with stakeholders to solicit their input and concerns, and provides incident updates and feedback through scheduled meetings and briefs.

Purpose

A primary liaison goal is to provide effective service and support to stakeholders. Critical success factors to attain this goal would include:

❑ Minimizing impact to stakeholders – this is done by the actions of the response organization using input from LO and stakeholders.

❑ Ensuring stakeholders are well informed.

❑ Holding positive meetings with stakeholders to solicit their input and concerns.

❑ Promptly handling damage claims – this is done through the Finance Section but can be facilitated by the LO's interaction with stakeholders.

Principles

In order to be effective in providing service and support to the stakeholder, it is imperative that the LO take into consideration several principal factors. These factors include:

❑ What is involved in stakeholder concerns?

- Where do stakeholder concerns originate?

- How can mutual gains be obtained?

- What skills or qualities are necessary for personnel involved in stakeholder liaison?

What is Involved in Addressing Stakeholder Concerns?

- Listening to public comments.

- Interacting with the community.

- Providing a continuous flow of information.

Where do Stakeholder Concerns Originate?

- Perceived adverse effects caused by the response organization.

- Perceived future adverse effects caused by the response organization.

- Disagreement in principle.

- Lack of trust and credibility.

How Can Mutual Gains (between response organizations and stakeholders) be Obtained?

- Acknowledge legitimacy of others' concerns.

- Accept responsibility, as appropriate.

- Develop information jointly.

- Establish an open communication process.

- Share information, easily and often.

- Demonstrate trust/credibility.

- Seek long term relationship.

What Skills or Qualities are Necessary for Personnel Involved in Stakeholder Liaison?

❑ Risk communication skills.

❑ Consensus building.

❑ Effective meeting management.

❑ Empathy (seek first to understand).

❑ Trust and credibility with the IC/UC so that recommendations regarding stakeholders are appropriately considered and used in decision-making.

Major Tasks

The identification of stakeholders for various incident types is done in the preparedness phase (i.e., in ACP development).

Stakeholders are affected by and have a vested interest in the incident and/or the response operation. While each member of the community is a stakeholder to some degree, the LO is responsible specifically for stakeholder groups that "fit" the general category of political, economic, or environmental, or groups with more focused interests such as natural resources, damage assessment, damage claimants, or civil/criminal investigations. The Information Officer (IO) is responsible for meeting the information needs of the general public/community.

Identify and Profile Stakeholders

The identification of a credible spokesperson for each of the stakeholder groups in the preparedness phase is critical .

Sources to help identify appropriate or potential stakeholder groups are:

❑ The IC/UC.

❑ Other members of the response organization, particularly local personnel/Area Committee members.

❑ The Area Contingency Plan (ACP).

❑ The local telephone directory.

A sample roster form to record information on stakeholders is provided in Appendix E.

❑ The IO or Joint Information Center (JIC) (who may have received inquiries from stakeholders)

Profiling stakeholders is performed in order to gain information on stakeholders' concerns and perceptions at the time of the incident. The outcome of the profile assists the LO in determining how to most effectively interact with the various stakeholders. Profiles should describe:

- The nature of the members in the stakeholder group.

- Whom they trust and go to for information.

- What they "believe," i.e. prevailing attitudes, knowledge, perceptions.

- What concerns and worries motivate their actions.

Categorize and Prioritize Stakeholders

The number of stakeholders that have potential involvement in any type incident can be phenomenal. The LO must, using information from the stakeholder profile, determine how to most effectively and efficiently attend to the identified stakeholders.

Most stakeholders can be broken out into three main categories:

- Core - those **directly** affected by the incident, i.e. land/marina owners.

- Interested - those **likely** to affected by the incident, i.e. local merchants.

- General public - those indirectly affected by the incident, i.e. local residents.

Communicate with IC/UC and Develop Stakeholder Liaison Strategies

The IC/UC needs to know the stakeholder situation and will be the final authority on determining how various stakeholders will be handled. It is imperative that the IC/UC be willing to incorporate stakeholder concerns into their decision-making process prior to the LO convening a forum for this purpose.

The following should be considered when determining strategies:

- Purpose and desired outcome,

- Timeline,

- Best entity to convene,

- Invitees, and

- Best forum.

Process Flowchart Reveals a Continuous Flow of Information

Incident Commander

Info Officer/ Liaison Officer

Agencies/ Stakeholders
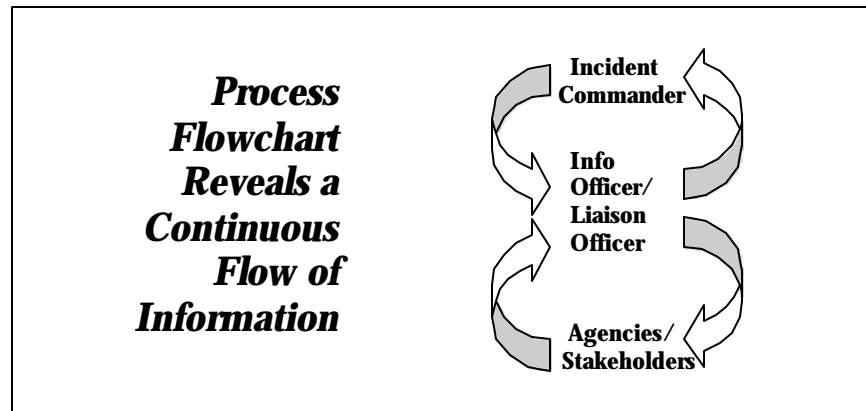
Recommended forums for different stakeholder types:

❑ Core stakeholders;

- Scheduled meetings.

- Chaired or facilitated workgroups.

- Unscheduled meetings.

- Focus Groups.

❑ Interested parties

- Interviews.

- Focus Groups.

- Public Meetings.

- Conferences.

- Workshops.

- Roundtables.

- Visioning exercises.

❑ General public (Communication with the general public is done by the IO and not by the LO)

Evaluate Effectiveness

The LO needs to identify stakeholder perception regarding how they are being handled by the LO/organization, i.e. are they satisfied? This is important feedback that might alter the method the LO chooses in order to interact with the stakeholders to better meet their needs. Ultimately, it will increase the chances of a favorable outcome in the stakeholder critical success factor for response measurement.

To do this, the LO must continually evaluate the effectiveness of the dialogue and communication with stakeholders. The goal of evaluation is to:

❑ Improve current and future dialogue and communication efforts.
❑ Assess changes in stakeholder concerns, issues, and opinions.
❑ Identify dialogue and communication efforts to change, modify, or enhance.

Strategies for Handling Stakeholder Concerns

Depending on the size and impact of an incident, the LO could be faced with the job of communicating with large quantities of stakeholders. Because of a limited resources, it is important for the LO be able to differentiate between those stakeholders having a need-to-know, and those that don't.

How does the LO decide which stakeholders are most important to communicate with?

The LO should target:

Outcome of the stakeholder profile will tell which stakeholders fall into these categories.

❑ Groups likely to be affected.
❑ Groups likely to perceive themselves as affected.
❑ Groups likely to be angry if not asked/involved.
❑ Groups previously involved/interested in the issue.
❑ Groups you'd **least** like to communicate with.

• *The LO and staff should address different stakeholder groups in separate forums. This ensures adequate exchange of information on the specific issues of each stakeholder group. Grouping all of the stakeholders together and holding a "public meeting" to gain their input is a recipe for disaster, especially in a high-risk, low-trust environment.*

Provide Incident Information Updates

Some interested stakeholders would be satisfied simply to receive incident/response activity updates periodically. For these stakeholders, a prudent course of action is to:

❑ Establish a schedule to periodically transmit incident updates from IO/JIC to these stakeholders, and
❑ Evaluate the effectiveness of this communication method to determine if changes are necessary.

Provide Specific Information

Some interested stakeholders will need more specific information to satisfy their concerns. Sometimes these stakeholders can be satisfied through education and do not need to be involved in the decision-making aspects of the response. In this case, prudent steps would be:

❑ Development of specific fact sheets or key messages to address stakeholder concerns. Check with IO/JIC for assistance in this area.

❑ Transmission of the information without face-to-face contact or use of a public meeting forum. Remember that public meetings are usually better for **providing** information to an audience rather than **receiving** input from the audience.

❑ Evaluation of the effectiveness of this communication method to determine if changes are necessary.

Provide an Interactive Forum for Dialogue with Stakeholders

These forums are designed to gather stakeholder input and provide influence into the response process. In this case, the process would be to:

❑ Conduct an advisory process to gather input. This could be anything from a suggestion box to an "open house" type meeting.

❑ Evaluate effectiveness to determine stakeholder satisfaction and if communication method changes are necessary. Refer to the JIC Manual, Community Feedback Supplement for evaluation tool.

SMALL LIAISON OFFICE

(3 to 4 People)

```
              ┌──────────────┐
              │   Liaison    │
              │   Officer    │
              └──────┬───────┘
          ┌──────────┴──────────┐
┌──────────────┐        ┌───────────────────────┐
│  Internal    │        │  Stakeholder/Agency   │
│    Staff     │        │        Staff          │
└──────────────┘        └───────────────────────┘

Data Gathering                Inquiries
Dissemination                 Analysis
 Info Boards                  Scheduler
 Fact Sheets                  Briefings
   Supply                    Field escorts
```

MEDIUM LIAISON OFFICE

(5 to 11 people)

```
                          ┌─────────────┐
                          │   Liaison   │
                          │   Officer   │
                          └──────┬──────┘
                          ┌──────┴──────┐
                          │  Assistant  │
                          │   Liaison   │
                          │   Officer   │
                          └──────┬──────┘
        ┌────────────────────────┼────────────────────────┐
┌───────┴───────┐       ┌────────┴────────┐       ┌────────┴────────┐
│   Internal    │       │     Agency      │       │   Stakeholder   │
│     Staff     │       │     Staff       │       │     Staff       │
└───────┬───────┘       └────────┬────────┘       └────────┬────────┘
```

Internal Staff	Agency Staff	Stakeholder Staff
Data Gathering	Inquiries	Inquiries
Dissemination	Analysis	Meetings
Info Boards	Scheduler	Analysis
Fact Sheets	Briefings	Briefings
Supply	Field escorts	Field escorts
Case Book		
Documentation		

Appendix A-2

LARGE LIAISON OFFICE

(12 to 14 people)

```
                          ┌──────────────┐
                          │   Liaison    │
                          │   Officer    │
                          └──────────────┘
                                 │
                          ┌──────────────┐
                          │  Assistant   │
                          │   Liaison    │
                          │   Officer    │
                          └──────────────┘
                                 │
      ┌──────────────┬───────────┴───────────┬──────────────┐
┌────────────┐ ┌────────────┐        ┌──────────────┐ ┌────────────┐
│  Internal  │ │   Agency   │        │ Stakeholder  │ │  Protocol  │
│   Staff    │ │   Staff    │        │    Staff     │ │   Staff    │
└────────────┘ └────────────┘        └──────────────┘ └────────────┘
```

Internal Staff	Agency Staff	Stakeholder Staff	Protocol Staff
Data Gathering	Inquiries	Inquiries	Inquiries
Dissemination	Field escorts	Field escorts	Field escorts
Info Boards	Scheduler	Analysis	VIP support
Fact Sheets	Analysis	Briefings	Escorts
Supply	Support		
Case Book			
Pictures/Video			

ICS LIAISON OFFICER JOB AID

Position Summary

The complete list of responsibilities are listed in the NIIMS Incident Command Systems Position Manual for the Liaison Officer (ICS-220-3). During a response to an incident or planned event, the key tasks associated with the Liaison Officer include:

♦ Providing a point of contact for assisting and cooperating agencies and stakeholder groups.
♦ Identifying agency representatives from each agency and points of contact for stakeholder groups.
♦ Keeping supporting agencies, organizations, and stakeholder groups aware of the incident status.
♦ Providing forums to obtain stakeholder input and concerns.
♦ Monitoring incident operations to identify current or potential inter-organizational issues
♦ Advising the Incident Commander/Unified Command.
♦ Participating in planning meetings; providing current agency resource status information.

References: (Not all inclusive)

♦ Oil Spill Field Operation Guide, (ICS-OS-420-1).
♦ California Firescope Fire Service Field Operations Guide.
♦ NIIMS I-402 Liaison Officer Student Workbook.
♦ NIIMS ICS Position Manual, Liaison Officer (ICS-220-3).
♦ NIIMS Task Book for Liaison Officer (LOFR) (NFES 2304).

Support Materials: Ensure that these materials are available during an incident to the Liaison Officer if not already provided in a unit or section specific support kit.

♦ ICS Form 213 (General Message).
♦ ICS Form 214 (Unit Log).
♦ Field Operations Guide.
♦ Local Telephone Directory.
♦ Liaison Officer Position Manual.
♦ Pens/pencils/note paper/stapler/Post-it Notes, etc.
♦ Blank roster for Assisting/Cooperating Agency and Agency Representative information.
♦ Local Area Contingency Plan (ACP).
♦ Portable computer loaded with database of area stakeholders, political entities, and internet capabilities, if possible.

Appendix B-1

Initial Actions

General Tasks   Below is a general task checklist that should be completed as soon as possible after being assigned to an incident.

STEP	ACTION	✔
1.	Receive assignment	❏
2.	Upon arrival at the incident, check in at designated Check-in location.	❏
3.	Obtain an initial brief from the Incident Commander: Size and complexity of incident. • Expectations of the IC. • Incident objectives. • Agencies/organizations/stakeholders involved. • Incident activities/situation. • Special concerns.	❏
4.	Review Incident Action Plan (IAP).	❏
5.	Identify assisting and cooperating agencies (See Appendix D-1).	❏
6.	Identify stakeholders & points of contact for ❏ various groups (see Appendix E-1): • Political. • Environmental. • Economic. • Special Interests (health, wildlife, port users).	
7.	Maintain a detailed LO Unit Activity Log (ICS 214) Note: Log should contain enough detail to reconstruct all events. Expect to provide information on politically hot/sensitive issues.	❏

Initial Actions (cont'd)

General Tasks   Job continues from previous page.

STEP	ACTION	✔
8.	Establish a work location (Liaison Office): • Adequate space. • Close to planning section. • Communications capability.	❏
9.	Acquire support materials (see job aid cover page)	❏
10.	Organize, assign, and brief staff.	❏
11.	Discuss functions with Information Officer: • Ensure no duplication of effort. • Responsibilities are clear for IO and LO. {table below}	❏
12.	Track and stay aware of incident expansion/❏ contraction due to changes in conditions.	
13.	Meet daily with stakeholder groups and agency representatives: • Solicit input/recommendations. • Share concerns. • Provide follow-up meetings.	❏
14.	Complete forms and reports required of the Assigned position and send material through supervisor to Documentation Unit.	❏

Table within step 11:

Position	Responsibilities
IO	Public/town meetings
LO	Stakeholder group mtgs.
LO or IO	VIP escorts as directed

Information Exchange Matrix

Inputs/Outputs   Below is an input/output matrix to assist the Liaison Officer with obtaining information from other ICS positions and providing information to ICS positions.

MEET With:	WHEN:	Liaison Officer OBTAINS:	Liaison Officer PROVIDES:
Incident Commander	Initial incident brief and Command Staff meeting	Current incident objectives	Information on agencies, stakeholders, potential issues
Planning Section Chief	Planning meeting	Incident situation status Daily meeting Schedule IAPs for Distribution Projections on Incident Additional agency & organization names that should be incorporated	Assisting agency capabilities Available resources Status of cooperating agency activities in support of incident Stakeholder concerns/issues
Documentation. Unit Leader	Planning meeting/ Demobilization meeting		Special concerns of agency resources for demobilization ICS 214 (Unit Log)
Operations Section Chief	Planning meeting	Incident situation status during initial phases	
Information Officer	Command Staff meeting/Planning meeting	Copies of news/ press releases. Names of additional agencies or organizations that should be incorporated into the incident.	Delineation of responsibility between LO & IO. Information on agency participation & scheduled stakeholder meetings. Need for Town Hall meetings. Stakeholder sentiment analysis.

Information Exchange with Agency representatives/Stakeholders

Identify Agencies   Below is a flowchart for determining whether the Liaison Officer or Information Officer is responsible for coordinating with assisting/cooperating agencies.

STEP:	ACTION:	✓
1.	The LO compiles complete list of assisting and cooperating agencies and stakeholders by referring to ACP/RCP/Chamber of Commerce/Area/or District SOP	❑
2.	Use this flowchart to determine whether the LO IO will have primary responsibility to coordinate/ Inform each agency stakeholder	❑

Can the assisting/ cooperating agency/ stakeholder CONTRIBUTE:
- Equipment
- People
- Funds

Yes

No

Can the assisting/ cooperating agency/ stakeholder INFLUENCE the BEST RESPONSE?

Yes

No

Add name to Information Officer's fax list

Add to Liaison Officer's list

Has potential for escalation/ de-escalation of the incident changed?

Yes

No

Re-evaluate next operational period

Information Exchange Matrix (continued)

Identify Agencies   Below is a flowchart for determining whether the Liaison Officer or Information Officer is responsible for coordinating with assisting/cooperating agencies.

MEET With:	WHEN:	Liaison Officer OBTAINS:	Liaison Officer PROVIDES:
Logistics Section Chief	Planning meeting	Telephones, fax Cellular phone Pagers, assistants Adequate space	Need for services, equipment, personnel
Finance Section Chief	Planning meeting		Special agency documentation (i.e. time sheets for cost doc.)
Agency Representatives and Stakeholders	Agency Representative/ Stakeholder meetings.	Information on available resources Information on special agency needs or Requirements. Information on cooperating agency activities in support of incident.	Incident status updates Information on logistical support for agency resources Information on assignment of agency resources Information on demobilization procedures Facilitation at the Stakeholder agency representatives meeting.

Assisting or Cooperating Agencies by Type of Incident

A = Assisting Agency
C = Cooperating Agency
B = Could be either

Agency	Fire	Oil	HAZMAT	Law Enforcement	Search & Rescue	Earth Quake
Fire Agencies	A	A	A	C	A	A
Ambulance Companies	C	A	A	C	C	A
Law Enforcement Agencies	C	C	C	A	A	A
Cable TV Companies	C	C	C	C	C	C
Transportation Agencies	B	C	C	C	C	A
FAA	C	C	C	C	C	C
Power Company	C	C	C	C	C	A
Air Quality Agencies	C	A	A	C	C	C
Gas Company	C	C	C	C	C	A
Fish & Game Agencies	C	A	A	C	C	C
Water Company	C	C	C	C	C	A
Phone Company	C	C	C	C	C	C
Chemical Cleanup Co.	C	A	A	A	A	A
Health Agencies	C	A	A	C	C	A
Contractors	B	B	B	B	B	B
Railroad	C	C	C	C	C	C
Weather Bureau	C	C	C	C	C	C
Red Cross	C	C	C	C	C	C
Military	B	B	B	B	B	B

Appendix C-1

Assisting/Cooperating Agency Roster

Agency Name	Rep Name	Phone & Pager Numbers	Location (on/off incident)	Date Recorded
		Ph: **Cell:** **Pager**		
		Ph: **Cell:** **Pager**		
		Ph: **Cell:** **Pager:**		
		Ph: **Cell:** **Pager:**		
		Ph: **Cell:** **Pager:**		

Stakeholder (Environmental/Economic/Political) Group Roster

Stakeholder Group Name	Point of Contact	Phone & Fax Numbers	Incident Updates	Attend Meetings	Date Recorded
		Ph: Fax:	Y/N	Y/N	
		Ph: Fax:	Y/N	Y/N	
		Ph: Fax:	Y/N	Y/N	
		Ph: Fax:	Y/N	Y/N	
		Ph: Fax:	Y/N	Y/N	
		Ph: Fax:	Y/N	Y/N	
		Ph: Fax:	Y/N	Y/N	